

In the Claims

Clean version incorporating changes:

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1. (amended) A baseball batting practice method for improving the batting skills of a player, comprising:

selecting a spherical ball from which a segment has been removed to leave the ball comprised of an exterior spherical portion and a flat area, the removed segment being sized such that a perpendicular line from a center of the flat area to an opposite side of the remaining spherical portion is equal to or between forty-five and fifty-five percent of the original spherical ball diameter;

selecting a pitcher of lesser skill from a larger number of practice pitchers which are available;

A3 said pitcher gripping the ball in a manner to enable one of several standard pitches;

the pitcher initiating a throwing motion;

the pitcher moving an arm in a manner to enable a chosen standard pitch;

the pitcher releasing the ball at a time and in a manner to enable the chosen pitch and to direct the ball to a target area in proximity to a human batter, to enable the human batter to attempt to identify standard pitches; and

said batter swinging at said ball with a bat having a substantially constant diameter smaller than a regulation baseball bat, to improve the human batter's batting skills.

A3 2. (amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the removed segment is one-half of the original spherical ball.

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Cancel claims 3-5.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the standard pitches comprise a fastball, knuckleball, screwball, slider, curveball, sinkerball, splitfinger fastball, and rising fastball.

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7. (amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the chosen standard pitch is the fastball, the ball is gripped vertically and released straight overhand.

8. (amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the chosen standard pitch is the knuckleball, the ball is gripped by placing the flat area of the unit in a palm of a throwing hand and thrown and released straight overhand.

9. (amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the chosen standard pitch is the screwball, the ball is gripped vertically, thrown underhand, and released while twisting a throwing hand to the right for right hand throwers or to the left for left hand throwers.

A4 10. (amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the chosen standard pitch is the slider, the ball is gripped vertically and thrown and released at a three-quarter side arm position.

11. (amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the chosen standard pitch is the curveball, the ball is gripped vertically and thrown and released at a one-half side arm position.

12. (amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the chosen standard pitch is the sinkerball, the ball is gripped with the flat area up and thrown and released at a one-half

side arm position.

13. (amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the chosen standard pitch is the splitfinger fastball, the ball is gripped the flat area up and thrown and released at a three-quarter side arm position.

14. (amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the chosen standard pitch is the rising fastball, the ball is gripped with the flat area down, thrown one-half side arm, and released while slightly tilting the ball forward.

15. (amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ball is constructed from rubber.

16. (amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing an instructional table describing grips, arm movements and release methods for the various standard pitches, for pitcher enablement, and for the batter to learn to identify the standard pitches associated with arm movements, to enable the batter to improve batting ability by recognizing the arm movement while batting and anticipating the standard pitch associated with the identified arm movement.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the instructional table includes illustrations of arm positions.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the instructional table includes illustrations of ball gripping positions.

Cancel claims 19 and 20.

21. (amended) A method for playing a game of baseball using a modified baseball and bat comprising:

substituting, for the baseball, a modified baseball, the modified baseball comprising a spherical unit from which a segment has been removed to leave a modified baseball comprised of an exterior spherical portion and a flat area, the removed segment being sized such that a perpendicular line from a center of the flat area to an opposite side of the remaining spherical portion is equal to or between forty-five and fifty-five percent of the original spherical unit diameter;

substituting for the bat a bat having a substantially constant diameter smaller than a regulation baseball bat; and

playing the game using the modified baseball and bat.

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Cancel claims 22 and 23.